THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

connections

Equality of Opportunity and Freedom from Discrimination

Human Rights Awards Recipients Announced

The Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Manitoba Human Rights Commission proudly announce the recipients of the 2015 Human Rights Awards. These awards are given out every year in celebration of International Human Rights Day.

The Annual Human Rights Commitment Award of Manitoba recognizes those who have promoted respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and have advanced the rights of Manitobans.

In honour of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report, the 2015 Commitment Award of Manitoba will be awarded to a group that has worked towards reconciliation within Manitoba, Meet Me at the Bell Tower (MM@BT). This group has been meeting weekly at the corner of Selkirk and Powers for the past four years to create a voluntary alternative to violence and provide examples and opportunities to participate in building a stronger community. In 2015, MM@BT has taken a specific focus on inviting different communities (Muslim, Filipino and new comer, for example) to connect with Indigenous leaders to become part of the "bell tower family".

The Annual Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award recognizes the work of a person or group of people, 25 years old and under, that has had an impact on the advancement of human rights as guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights legislation in Manitoba.

The 2015 recipient of the Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth award is Christie McLeod. Christie is active on both the local and national human rights scene working in areas that range from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, to sex trafficking, to women's rights. She is also the founder and

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The Rights Connection

By Yvonne Peters – Chairperson

Why December 10th is so Important this Year.

On December 10th, International Human Rights Day, will celebrated across the world. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed and adopted on December 10, 1948. In Canada, it also is a time to recognize and reflect on the many efforts made to ensure that human rights are respected as a core value of Canadian society.

We have much to be proud of and much to celebrate. Canada protects human rights at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels, and also guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination in the highest law of the country, Canada's Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada's commitment to human rights was highlighted a year ago, by becoming the first country in the world to open a museum dedicated to providing an inclusive experience for visitors to learn about and understand the importance of human rights.

Despite these achievements, Canada's commitment to human rights has been tested over the past several weeks. Catastrophes like the devastating terrorist attacks on Paris have made it seemingly acceptable for some to use negative stereotypes and discriminatory assumptions when talking about certain groups such as Syrian refugees and members of the Muslim religion.

To hold all members of a refugee group or religion responsible for the heinous acts of a few unsavory people amounts to stereotyping and discrimination of the worst kind and sets human rights back decades. In Manitoba we have worked hard to remove stereotypes and to instead treat people based on their personal merits.

Feelings of fear and concern following

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acts of terrorism are understandable and legitimate, but we should not allow fear to trump human rights. We must remember our history and the way that negative stereotypes and assumptions allowed Canada to refuse refuge to Jewish people attempting to escape the atrocities of the Second World War and our internment of innocent Japanese people.

So on this December 10th let us celebrate the human rights progress we have made in Canada and remember the damaging effects caused by negative stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour and the terrible consequences of such thinking. Let us strengthen our commitment to human rights and ensure that they remain a permanent and fundamental aspect of what it means to live in Canada.

> *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."*
>
> *Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

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managing director of the Human Rights Hub, an innovative website that just launched providing Winnipeggers with a portal to important human rights events and information.

Everyone is invited to attend the award reception in honour of this year's recipients. This will take place on December 9, 2015 at the Union Centre 206-275 Broadway, Winnipeg, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The event is free and light refreshments will be served. Everyone must register in order to attend this event. Online registration is available at www.manitobahumanrights.ca or call 204 945-7653.

DIO and MHRC Invite All to Attend Presentation at CMHR

History of the Disability Rights Movement

Please join the Disability Issues Office (DIO) and the Manitoba Human Rights Commission (MHRC) at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. in the Stuart Clark Garden of Contemplation. Ms. Judith Heumann, Special Adviser for International Disability Rights, U.S. Department of State will be speaking about the history of the disability rights movement.

On December 10, the CMHR will be offering a free day of special programming for all ages around the theme of inclusion. Along with Ms. Heumann's presentation, there will be a special citizenship ceremony, performances, a scavenger hunt, and an opportunity to create an installation art piece. Learn more about all of the CMHR's activities at www.humanrights.ca.

International Human Rights Day Activities in Brandon

Brandon will be marking Human Rights Day next week with a two-day event about the Truth and Reconciliation process and Canada's history of residential schools.

On December 9, there will be presentations from representatives of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba as well as discussions on the history of the Brandon Residential School, George Fitton School's "Project of Heart" initiative and a personal story of survival from local elder, Frank Tacan.

The event takes place from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Cultural Resource Centre at the A.R. McDiarmid Civic Complex.

An open house will also be held on December 10 at the same location starting at 6 p.m.

The second day will feature a screening of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet performance, "Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation," a talk with Winnipeg-based artist KC Adams about her stereotype-fighting photo series, "Perception" as well as art from George Fitton School, the Youth Revolution group and historical photos from Brandon's Residential School.